



# Virginia Youth Advisory Council

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Virginia Department of Social Services  
Independent Living Program  
Division of Family Services  
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### About VDSS

The Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) administers social services programs, consistent with federal and state law and policy of the State Board of Social Services, through local departments of social services throughout the state and its home office in Richmond. The VDSS mission is "People helping people triumph over poverty, abuse, and neglect to shape strong futures for themselves, their families and communities."

### For More Information

If you have questions or would like to become a member of Virginia's Youth Advisory Council (V-YAC):

- Talk to your case worker or your independent living coordinator
- Online: [www.vailp.com](http://www.vailp.com)
- Email: [va.yac@dss.virginia.gov](mailto:va.yac@dss.virginia.gov)



# - LEADERSHIP -



## What Is The Virginia Youth Advisory Council?

The Virginia Youth Advisory Council (V-YAC) is a network of young people currently in foster care and those aging out of foster care, who want to help themselves and each other become successful independent adults.

Through group activities, members can also develop skills they will use throughout their lives, including decision making, working as a member of a team, volunteerism, as well as effective communication.

V-YAC members help Virginia's foster care youth in many ways, including:

- Communicating current information about the foster care system
- Exchanging ideas that will improve foster care services
- Motivating other foster care youth to join V-YAC

- Communicating information about programs and funding for continuing education
- Providing input to local and state legislators, as well as other stakeholders regarding foster care policies and regulations

### Am I Eligible To Attend A Quarterly Conference?

In order to be eligible to attend a V-YAC quarterly conference, participants must:

- Be in foster care or aging out of foster care
- Be at least 15 years old, but not yet 21 years old
- Demonstrate good self-discipline
- Be in compliance with your local department of social services foster care and/or independent living program
- Secure a recommendation from a local department of social services or designee
- Be able to follow rules

**“ V-YAC strives to empower youth to have a positive impact in their communities; develop skills necessary for life-long learning and future success; promote youth's involvement in the Independent Living Program and leadership development; and provide an opportunity for youth to network with other youth.”**



### How Can I Become A V-YAC Member?

To be considered for V-YAC membership, you must be able to provide the following:

- Recommendation from your local department of social services or designee
- Completion of the orientation and four required workshops (youth leadership, advocacy, youth council, and communications skills)
- Demonstrate a willingness to volunteer at V-YAC Conferences
- Complete and submit a membership application
- Complete the interview process

### What Are My Responsibilities As A V-YAC Member?

Members are expected to:

- Serve without receiving monetary compensation
- Attend quarterly meetings, special meetings and events
- Serve on committees
- Serve for a term of one year and may renew their membership at the end of each year until reaching 21 years old

### What Are The Benefits Of Joining V-YAC?

The realities of adulthood can be overwhelming. V-YAC provides members with a network of support and solutions. Independent living coordinators, social workers and volunteers can help by providing the knowledge, information and resources necessary for a successful future.

V-YAC offers members an opportunity to connect with other youth in foster care. Together, members share real-life issues and provide each other with support and solutions. Joining V-YAC allows members to:

- Learn life and leadership skills
- Receive recognition and awards
- Help coordinate conferences and special events
- Learn from others who have been in foster care
- Participate in community service and volunteerism

